

THE MIDDLE AGES

AKA **The Dark Ages**

Thought to be a time of cultural & intellectual darkness
Between the fall of the Roman Empire & the Renaissance

1066: Norman Invasion

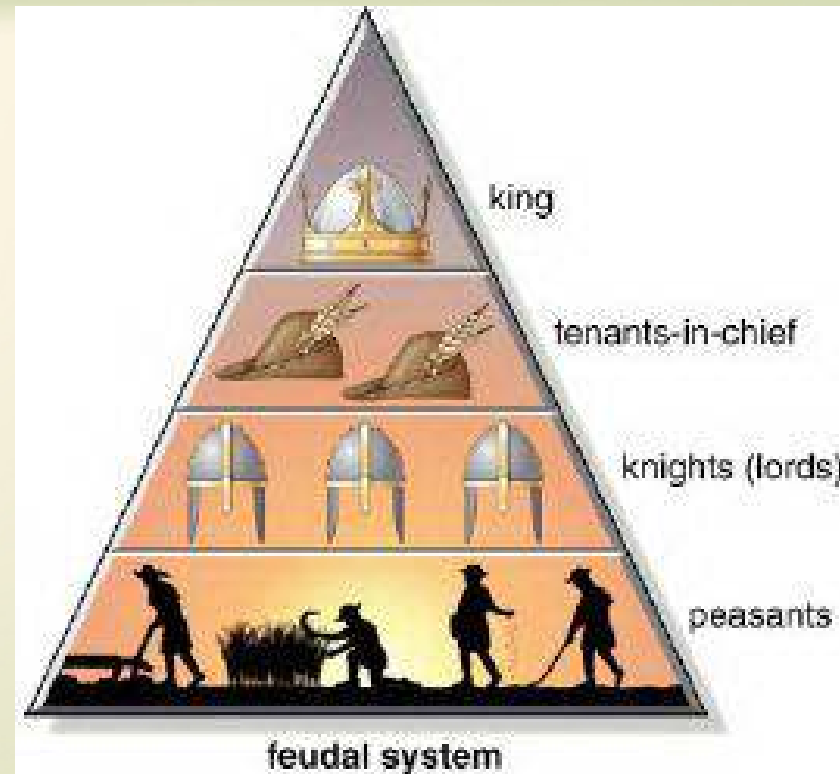
- Normans invaded b/c William was angry that Harold was chosen king
- William defeats Harold
- Normans controlled gov't & suppressed A.S. nobility & remade England on their own terms by instituting **feudalism**



FEUDALISM

Feudalism: the exchange of property for personal services

Created a new social structure



MEDIEVAL LITERATURE

Morality Plays: depicts the lives of ordinary people

Mystery Plays: reenactments of scenes from the Bible

Medieval Drama: Church sponsored plays





GEOFFREY CHAUCER

c. 1343-1400

- Sometimes called the "Father of English literature" or the "English Homer"
- Before Chaucer, not much was written in English; most people wrote in French (royalty) or Latin (clergy)
- Author of the *Canterbury Tales*
- Family was part of the new **middle class**
- His varied occupations & experiences made him able to tell stories from many perspectives

CANTERBURY TALES

- Began 124 tales, but only finished 24 before he died (these became the Canterbury Tales)
- Tales represent a wide variety of genres, including: the romance, the sermon, the fable, the fabliaux





CANTERBURY, ENGLAND

- Pilgrimage: long trip to a holy place
- Pilgrims would travel great distances to tombs of saints & other shrines to ask for assistance, give thanks, show devotion
- Canterbury=major destination for English pilgrims



THOMAS A BECKET

- Catholic martyr & saint
- Archbishop of Canterbury
- Murdered in Canterbury Cathedral
- His death was ordered by a dying King Henry II after Becket excommunicated 3 other bishops for performing Henry the Young King's coronation (which is the duty of the Bishop of Canterbury)
- Thomas a Becket refused to go to court for questioning, so soldiers rushed into his church & murdered him

CANTERBURY TALES: PROLOGUE



The Knight



The Manciple

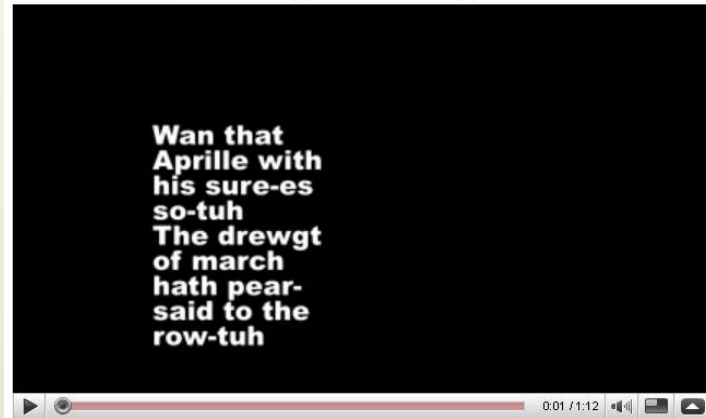


The Miller

- Written in Middle English
- Introduces a variety of characters
- Characters are stereotypes of their professions/stations in life
- Each character tells a set of stories, which together form The Canterbury Tales
- Shows the infinite variety of human nature

THE PROLOGUE

The Canterbury Tales Prologue in Middle English

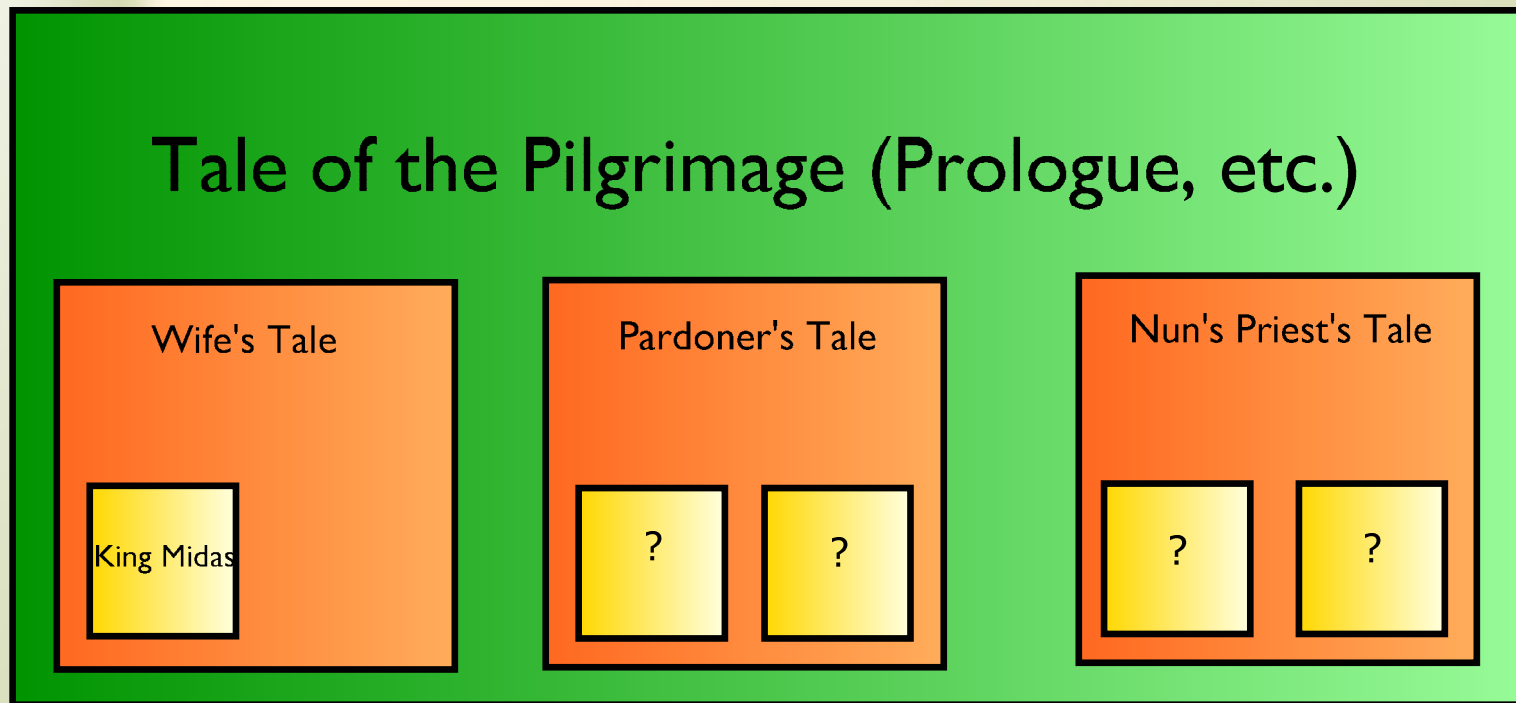


Canterbury Tales Rap



FRAME STORY

- A story within a story framework
- Holds together a series of tales





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